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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2015

Ice capades ahead

DeWitt Carter students can look forward to hitting the ice through Meridian Credit Union's Skates for Kids program
Page 3

City sells shares

Elective officials have agreed to a sale of PC Fibre's Niagara Region Broadband network shares for \$7.5 million
Page 12

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Port chorale ready for Christmas show



FRANK RUZYCKI/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

The Port Colborne Chorale is getting ready for its annual Christmas concert taking place Friday. The show, *Somewhere in My Memory*, led by director Roseann Shields, will be presented at St. James and St. Brendan Anglican Church at 7:30 p.m. and will feature a variety of sacred and secular music. Tickets cost \$10 and can be purchased from chorale members, at the door or by phoning 905-835-8157.

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UPFRONT

■ **HISTORY:** Timber structure at Port museum grounds

New home for old cabin

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

A centuries-old timber frame cabin has a new home at the Port Colborne museum.

The cabin, discovered within a Miller Road home that was being demolished a year ago, was placed on a new foundation on the museum grounds last week.

It will eventually be used as "a weaving shed," after more than year of renovations are completed, said museum curator Stephanie Powell-Baswick.

"It was discovered in a house when they were demolishing it, and very quickly a decision was made to bring it here," she said.

Although the museum is still researching the history of the cabin, she said museum staff believe the building is more than 200 years old.

"It's a unique building for us," she said. "We have other log cabins, but this is a timber frame cabin, which is a little different."

She said the size of the cabin — 24 by 20 feet and one and a half storeys tall — is unique among cabins built in that time period.

When the museum closes for the season in January, Powell-Baswick said, there will be more time to conduct more in-depth research on the history of the structure.

She said discovering historic buildings within old homes is not unusual during



FRANKI HEIMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Port Colborne Historical and Marine Museum curator Stephanie Powell-Baswick is pictured with the museum's new old log cabin, which had been found inside a home.

renovations.

"A lot of the other buildings that we have on our grounds that have been moved to the museum were discovered during renovations or someone was doing a teardown."

For instance, she said, an old log school house now at

the museum was found in Humberstone when someone was restoring their home.

"They found these big beams and thought, there's something here. Through records, we were able to find that it was a schoolhouse," she said.

Last month, as the new timber frame cabin was moved onto its new foundation, a woman visited the museum who said the old building used to belong to her grandparents, she said.

"She remembers as a young person going into that log

cabin before it was built up bigger."

When the renovations are complete, a weaving loom currently stored in a log cabin on the property will be put on display within the new building, Powell-Baswick said.

"One of the things on our

strategic plan was to acquire a building where we would interpret weaving specifically.

"Rather than having everything ready and then finding a cabin, it went the opposite way," she said. "We found a cabin and we're moving towards the goal of having it open for 2017, for the 150th anniversary of Canada."

Powell-Baswick said the renovations will include "structural improvements, a new roof and we're also going to work towards making it an accessible building."

The project will also include landscaping, as well as interior furnishings.

"It's going to be a hands-on building in terms of people being able to try their hand at weaving, spinning. We're hoping that it's also an educational tool."

While renovations are underway, the museum will also be raising funds to pay the yet-to-be-determined cost of the work, Powell-Baswick said.

"We didn't have a pot of gold waiting for this, so the fundraising campaign is ongoing in terms of once we meet our goal, we go to the next goal which is why I predict it will take that long."

She said the cabin was transported to the museum grounds last year, disassembled into two pieces to fit across the Clarence Street bridge.

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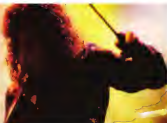
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LOCAL NEWS

■ **SKATES FOR KIDS:** PenFinancial Credit Union launches program in Port Colborne

Dewitt Carter students anxious to 'hit the ice'

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

It's an announcement that put smiles on the faces of 240 students at Dewitt Carter Elementary School in Port Colborne.

They cheered with enthusiasm when they learned their school had been selected for the Skates for Kids program for another year at an assembly last Friday morning.

Program co-ordinator Josh Julhke, marketing and communications specialist from PenFinancial Credit Union, shared the news with the students while launching the program for another year at an assembly last Friday morning.

"That's what we do in the Skates for Kids program, we help schools in Niagara by giving them all sorts of skates," he told the students.

The credit union launched the program in 2009, and has since provided thousands of skates and raised funds for 1,500 helmets for students at schools throughout the region.

"We've been able to help over 3,000 kids hit the ice in Niagara, which is something we are very proud of at PenFinancial," he said.

This year PenFinancial will



also be collecting donations for students at Edith Cavell School in St. Catharines.

PenFinancial chief executive officer Bob Watson said in past years the credit union has collected donations for more than two schools, but usually limits the program to two schools a year.

"It's a lot of work. And we feel we can do two (schools) really well," Watson said.

Watson said schools with a large number of students from families living at or below the poverty line are selected for the program each year, where

many children would normally not have the luxury of being able to purchase skates of their own.

He said the schools are selected with the assistance of the school board.

The credit union is asking people to donate used skates in good condition at any PenFinancial branch in the region, as well as at Front Row Sports stores.

The credit union is also accepting financial donations at its branches to help cover the cost of providing the students with helmets as

ALLAN BENNER
POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Dewitt Carter students are the beneficiaries of this year's Skates for Kids campaign, organized by PenFinancial Credit Union. From left are students Savannah Pelletier, Meadow McCulligh, Mason Henslip, and Anestis Yim, teachers Kaitlyn Zanetto and Chantal Wynn, and PenFinancial chief executive officer Bob Watson.

well. At the end of January, the credit union will return the schools to provide freshly-sharpened skates to students, who will spend a day learning to use them at a local arena.

"In the new year, we'll go skating with you and you'll get to test out those skates, test out those helmets. We're looking forward to it. Are you looking forward to it?" Julhke asked the students.

They responded with another enthusiastic cheer.

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■ **COMMUNITY:** Breakfast with Santa

Santa is coming to town

MICHELLE ALLENBERG
Postmedia Network

The Port Colborne Lionsess Club will give Santa a warm welcome with its annual Breakfast with Santa on Saturday — the same day he'll parade through city streets. It doesn't matter if you're naughty or nice, everyone is invited to join Santa for a pancake and sausage breakfast at the Port Colborne Lions Hall, 49 Chippewan Rd. Tickets are \$6 for all ages. Children will receive a surprise gift from Santa.

There will be two sittings for breakfast — 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

Funds raised through the sale of tickets and photos with Santa will go towards helping the community.

"Every time we raise funds we try to put it right back into Port Colborne — things like the food bank, we do things associated with Port Cares, we are looking to do support for breakfast clubs this year," said Katherine Klauk, vice-president of the Lionsess Club.

Klauk said this is a "special" event and she wants people to have a good time. Although the Lionsess Club uses this event as a way to fundraise Klauk said it's

more about the kids.

People can purchase raffle tickets at the event to win a stocking stuffed with toys and other goodies. The raffle will be drawn at the end of both breakfast sittings.

During breakfast Santa's Cookie Shack will be open for eventgoers to stock up on Christmas goodies.

Klauk said she's expecting 200 people to attend the breakfast. She said there will be about 1,000 pancakes made on Saturday.

Santa's trip to town doesn't end after breakfast. He will join the Santa Claus Parade at 6:30 p.m.

The parade start at Port Colborne High School and will end at the market square in front of city hall.

Over 50 colourful festive floats will travel the route to light up the night. Some of the participants include the West Seneca West Marching Band, the Lakeshore Catholic Secondary School band and Notre Dame's drum line.

If dancing to the beat of the drum doesn't warm the crowd, there will be hot chocolate available at the market square.

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I'VE BEEN THINKING

Turning thoughts toward human dignity

FATHER DAVID GRAHAM SCOTT
 St. Ignace of Antioch Orthodox
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The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

Behind this recognition of inherent human dignity stands the biblical witness that God created human-kind in his own image (Genesis 1).

The American Declaration of Independence acknowledged the divine basis for human dignity explicitly.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights ..."

But the 21st century has seen an explicit denial of both the biblical witness and the divine basis of human dignity. In fact, Harvard's Steven Pinker even called the concept of human dignity nonsensical in his article "The Stupidity of Dignity."

Since Pinker's article, there have been a number of books on the meaning and importance of human dignity. But these works have no use for any notion of human dignity based on our creation in God's image.

Human dignity is now based on a newly invented right to go beyond natural limitations and to create oneself anew. The basis for human dignity is now thought to be the freedom to become different through an upsurge of creativity which can never be conclusively defined or limited.

Roberta Green Ahmanson in her article "The New Dignity" says, "This is the meaning of human dignity in a world with no clear origin, no purposeful end, no intrinsic meaning, and nothing real beyond matter in motion." She notes that dignity "is no longer so much about who or what we are; it is about what our unfettered will can do, and

what it can forbid others to do."

This new dignity demands freedom to remake one's gender, to marry persons of one's own sex, to choose when to die and to require the medical profession to enable one's death, to abort an unborn child and to sell its body parts for commercial gain. The new dignity also calls for freedom from language or ideas that offend or challenge the choices and decisions that one makes.

In contrast to the new dignity, the good news of Christ proclaimed that every human being has inherent worth and dignity because every human being is created in the image of

God. The human will to become divine by defying God's command resulted in universal enslavement and death. But the New Man, who obeyed God in faith even to death on a cross, opened up the way for humanity to be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1).

Moreover, those who deny themselves, take up their cross and follow Christ become a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own special people (1 Peter 2). Indeed "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3).

Those people who presume that there is no Creator

and that humans are animals who can create themselves may argue that Christian faith is a fantasy. But Christ rose from the dead; his tomb was empty; no one could produce his corpse. He breathed on his disciples, restored them to peace with God, and ate with them. "And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs" (Mark 16).

In short, you matter to God and his Church. You were created for growth into the likeness of Christ Jesus in the communion of the Holy Spirit. And we have this hope as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.

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 Hattie Hutt
 is pictured on
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 Clair River in
 this undated
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Shipwrecks – Hattie Hutt

SKIP OLLIHAM
 For Postmedia Network

Hattie Hutt was a three-masted schooner that sailed in the vigorous Great Lakes trades for more than a half century.

The 39.62-metre-long vessel was built at Saugatuck, Mich., and completed in 1873. It went to work in the lumber trade as the *E.B. Stockbridge* and could carry 300,000 board feet from the northern lumber docks to the growing cities down the lakes.

The ship was sold and renamed

Hattie Hutt in 1881 and came to Canada for E. Granville of Chatham, in 1908.

For the final years, *Hattie Hutt* operated in the Lake Ontario coal trade bringing cargoes from New York ports to Kingston. This work continued through the 1926 season. The ship was then laid up and eventually abandoned in the inner harbour at Kingston.

The hull was stripped of anything useful during the Depression and what remained settled on the bottom. *Hattie Hutt* was pumped out in 1937, towed to deep water off Nine Mile Point, eastern Lake Ontario, and allowed to sink.

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■ HEALTH CARE

No ministry commitment on hospital timeline

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is making no commitments to the timing of building a new south Niagara hospital in Niagara Falls.

Niagara Falls Mayor Jim Diodatti stated recently that he believes that construction of the hospital would begin by the end of 2016.

Diodatti said his assessment was based on past conversations with Health Min-

ister Eric Hoskins, although the project timelines would need to be announced by the ministry.

But ministry spokesman David Jensen said the timing of the project depends on how quickly the preliminary planning work that is still in its early stages is completed.

"The timelines for implementing the project will depend on the planning parameters established as part of the capital planning process," Jensen wrote

in an e-mail, last Wednesday morning. "The ministry is currently working with the hospital and LHIN, and once these parameters have been accepted by the ministry and the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network, Niagara Health System will proceed to detailed planning of programs and services."

Jensen said the project is still "in the early stages of the capital planning process." "To date, the project has

received government approval to plan and a preliminary grant of up to \$26.2 million," he said, referring to funding approved in early 2014.

"Government approval to implement will be required for the project to proceed to design and implementation," he added.

Plans for the hospital, that have been estimated to cost \$800 million, were announced in 2012 as part of the recommendations from Niagara Health System supervisor Kevin Smith, that also called for the closure of other hospital sites serving south Niagara communities.

The proposed hospital is planned for 12 hectares of serviced land donated in 2013 by the Grassl family, at the intersection of Montrose and Biggar roads on the outskirts of Niagara Falls.

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■ SEAWAY

Newest U.S. warship travels canal



PHOTOS BY GREG FURMINGER/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

USS Milwaukee makes its maiden voyage through the Welland Canal in Welland.

GREG FURMINGER
Postmedia Network

America's newest warship, the *USS Milwaukee*, made its maiden voyage through the Welland Canal Saturday. The combat ship, which is intended to patrol coastal waters, was commissioned Sunday, Nov. 21, in Wisconsin,

and made a three-day stop in Detroit, en route to the Atlantic Ocean.

It was met by hundreds of people as it entered the canal at Port Colborne at about 10 a.m. Saturday.

According to the America's Navy website, the ship has a San Diego-based crew of 104 people.

It is expected to be in service for at least a quarter-century.

USS Milwaukee has a sister ship, *USS Detroit*, which will be commissioned in Detroit next year.

The website said the ship is to head south along the east coast to the Panama Canal then to the port of San Diego.



USS Milwaukee makes its maiden voyage through the Welland Canal in Welland on Saturday.

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■ RESORT BLAZE

Sherkston Shores cottages damaged by fire

Postmedia Network

A number of cottages at Sherkston Shores Resort were damaged by fire last Tuesday night, including at least one destroyed by flames.

Port Colborne Fire and Emergency Services Deputy Chief Mike Bendia said although an investigation into the blaze is ongoing, it will be

difficult to pinpoint a cause because the trailer in which the fire started was reduced to a steel frame.

Another trailer may also be ruled a writeoff after fire spread to it, while two other cottages sustained heat damage, Bendia said.

Sherkston Shores put the number of damaged trailers

at five.

Firefighters were dispatched to the private resort at the end of Empire Road at about 10:15 p.m. Sixteen local firefighters fought the blaze, with mutual aid, including a tanker truck and other personnel, provided by Port Erie Fire Department.

Firefighters remained on scene for three-and-a-half hours.

Depending on structural assessment of the damaged units, Bendia said the total could come in at about \$150,000 to \$200,000.

The fire at the sprawling resort was detected by Sherkston Shores security.

"Two cottages in the Eberly Woods neighbourhood were heavily damaged and three in the Mainer Crescent area sustained heat damage," the resort said on its Facebook page.

The neighbourhood is the resort's southwest, toward the Wyldewood Beach area.

No foul play is suspected,

Sherkston reported.

"All vacation cottage owners whose cottages were damaged have been notified," the resort said to its Facebook followers.

"We are thankful no one was in the cottages at the time of the fire. Please join us in extending our sympathies to those with lost and damaged cottages."



Port Colborne man recipient of provincial seniors award

A Port Colborne man has been named recipient of a 2015 Ontario Senior Achievement Award.

Dick Moore is one of 19

recipients of the award that recognizes people who have made outstanding contributions to their communities through voluntary or professional activities after the age of 65.

Moore is a longtime leader and advocate for the growing community of seniors identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and transsexual (LGBT). He helped form the Senior PRIDE network and worked closely with the City of Toronto to ensure that the unique needs of LGBT seniors were addressed in the city's programs and services.

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FILM

The Way We Was showing at Lakeshore

FRANKI IKEMAN
Postmedia Network

A local documentary filmmaker will screen the premiere of his new film at Lakeshore Catholic High School in early December.

Christopher Darton lost his job when Slots at Fort Erie Race Track suddenly closed down a few years ago. The job loss catapulted Darton into making his first film, a documentary about a Toronto blues band from the 1960s.

The Way We Was: The Story of the Kendall Wall Band is a full-length documentary about the group, a central house band in the Toronto blues community.

Darton said having the opportunity to screen the film, which has been finished for several months, will not only be a great way to have it seen but also a way to put the project to rest.

The venue came to be after Lakeshore vice-principal Andrew Boon read an article in *The Tribune* about Darton and his film.

Boon said he approached principal Glenn Gifford and the duo decided to use their school auditorium to showcase Darton's work.

"I think it's just a way that we can engage not only our students but the community — really show off the facilities that we have here at Lakeshore Catholic High School," Gifford said.

"To take his work and to showcase it here at our school, I think is good for students, it's good for the community, it's good for Chris and it's good for the blues."

An avid music fan himself, Boon said

reaching out to Darton and being able to incorporate his work into the learning environment at the school seemed like a natural fit.

"It was an obvious idea to complement what Chris has done and incorporate it with not only the school as a facility, but with the actual students," he said.

The show will see students from several backgrounds and disciplines pitching in to host the event.

"We have students there that are going to be playing music, we have students there, culinary, that are going to be providing some refreshments. We have our film studies class that is going to get a chance to not just view something, but also hear from someone that's practically done it."

"And to us, that learning opportunity for the kids, it connects right across the curriculum," Boon said.

Darton said working with the students in organizing the premiere, as well as speaking to film class students, has been a good experience all around.

"It was an opportunity for them and an opportunity for me and it was kind of a great marriage like that," Darton said. "It's great for them. I never had a film resource when I was in school and interested in it."

The screening will take place at Lakeshore Catholic Performing Arts Centre on Thursday, Dec. 3, at 7 p.m. Admission is \$5 and tickets can be purchased in advance from Boon at andrew.boon@ncdsb.com or at the door.

franki.ikeman@sunmedia.ca
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■ **SEAWAY:** Upgraded app warns when spans about to be raised for ship traffic

Bridge repairs to follow canal closure

GREG FURMINER
Postmedia Network

Long-awaited repairs to a Port Colborne canal crossing put out of commission at the end of September are expected to start about five weeks from now.

St. Lawrence Seaway Management Corp. has confirmed the Welland Canal will close for its shipping season on Wednesday, Dec. 30.

As was the plan for repairs to Bridge 19 on Highway 3, work will commence "in earnest" following the closure, seaway corporation spokesman Andrew Bogora said.

The Welland Canal span on the city's Main Street sustained extensive damage Sept. 30 when it was struck by the cargo ship *Lena J.* It has been closed to traffic ever since, but has been accessible to pedestrians.

Bogora couldn't say how much the bridge repair will cost, but said Tuesday "damage is a little more severe than the initial survey indicated."

That damage includes to the structural steel of the span. Seaway officials are acutely aware of the impact the bridge closure is having on businesses and nearby motorists, he said.

Meanwhile, for motorists, the seaway this week upgraded its bridge status information available through its website

and smartphone app.

While Niagara bridge information had been posted in green for available or red for

unavailable raising or lowering, akin to traffic lights, an orange designation now indicates available but raising soon.

Bridge information, and other seaway details including vessel transit, can be found at www.greatlakes-seaway.com.

IN BRIEF

Mediation ends strike against CarePartners

A strike against CarePartners in Niagara and Norfolk by Ontario Public Service Employees Union Local 294 has ended with mediated arbitration.

The local had been on strike since April 10.

In a release, CarePartners says it's "now in the process

of reaching out to share information with all of its patients, along with CarePartners' RNs, RPNs and team assistants."

In Niagara and Norfolk, the company delivers home care services and provides nursing services to more than 1,800 patients.

The outcome came from a full-day mediation last Thursday at the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

No agreement has been reached, but CarePartners says both sides have agreed contract terms will be finalized through a continued mediation-arbitration process.

In a published news release, OPSEU says members of Local 294 will return to work starting Dec. 14.



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IN BRIEF

Niagara Catholic to end year with deficit

Niagara Catholic District School Board will likely dip into its accumulated surplus after incurring a \$1,954-million deficit during 2015. Its operating budget for the year was \$267 million. The 2015 deficit is a decrease from a \$3.6-million deficit in 2014. The board's accumulated surplus will slip to \$9.97 million

from \$11.9 million. Auditor Mark Palumbi, of Crawford, Smith and Swallow Chartered Accountants, presented the annual audit to the board last Tuesday. He highlighted the assets and risks in a provincial mandated annual audit pointing out the school board's net debt went up to \$181 million in 2015 from \$177 million in 2014. The board used an audit committee to work with the auditors.

St. Catharines trustee Kathy Burtlik said it made the process much smoother.

Snowplowing and sanding to cost \$4 million

Each time the snowplows come out, it costs Niagara Catholic \$16,485, while each salting operation carries a \$13,316 bill.

EDUCATION

WAYNE CAMPBELL Special to Postmedia Network

Niagara Catholic is broadening the term "culture of life" beyond a political use.

Stephanie Jarrett, Notre Dame College School chaplain, and Greg Robertson of Saint Paul Catholic Secondary School, last Tuesday reported to the school board on the third annual Culture of Life Conference held RECENTLY at Mount Carmel Spiritual Centre.

Jarrett said Culture of Life philosophy goes back to the early days of the church, in the first century. It relates to the whole life of a person.

"In more recent years the

term has been used extensively, often in political arenas, to defend or fight specific life issues such as abortion, euthanasia and stem cell research, with these battles often placing these concerns in very narrow silos," she told trustees.

"When we return to the root of this concept, however, we can see that this philosophy is actually much broader," she said.

"All the elements of Catholic social teaching build the Culture of Life and should be a way of life that weaves through our entire day, a perspective that helps us fight against abortion but also, fighting bullying, and preserve the dig-

nity of every human person."

About 140 students from all eight Niagara Catholic secondary schools attended the conference of speakers and workshops in Niagara Falls.

Alex Schadenberg, executive director of Euthanasia Prevention Coalition, served as keynote speaker.

"End-of-life issues are of great concern in our current political landscape, with developing legislation on doctor-assisted suicide and euthanasia," said Jarrett.

Robertson said the idea to review the approach to Culture of Life came from Debra McCaffery, the board's chaplaincy leader during their drive back from an anti-abortion dem-

onstration in Ottawa.

Sadly, he said, McCaffery died in hospital on Nov. 5 while the students were at the conference.

Many students in attendance were able to bring learning from the conference back to their classes, said Jarrett.

"They study these issues in law, religion, sociology, and parenting classes as well as Culture of Life clubs from our secondary schools,"

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IN BRIEF

Region says no to Main Street crossing

Niagara Region has told Port Colborne city council that a section of Main Street does not warrant a pedestrian activated crossing signal after conducting a traffic study in the area.

The request came from Ward 2 Coun. Angie Desmarais in July for the installation of the crossing signal at the intersection of Main Street East and Wellington Street, which director of engineering and operations Ron Hanson brought forward to the region.

In a letter to Hanson dated Nov. 6, the Region said that the intersection failed to meet the warrants required for a pedestrian signal to be installed.

"Should the City of Port Colborne wish to install a pedestrian signal at this location at the city's expense, staff would consider allowing this. The cost is approximately in the amount of \$90,000," the letter, signed by corridor safety manager Petar Vujic, reads.

Desmarais directed staff to submit that amount for 2016 budget considerations.

Appointments to East Village task force made

Council has appointed three residents of Port Colborne's East Village to the community's neighbourhood improvement task force.

The task force was established at the Oct. 13 meeting of council to address concerns revolving around property standards and criminal activity in the neighbourhood.

Residents William Coates, Michael Jessome and Dee Tilbrook were selected to represent the residents of East Village on the task force.

Fire department gets replacement vehicle

Fire Chief Tom Cartwright submitted a request to council to purchase a new utility vehicle to replace the department's 2000 GMC van.

The purchase of a new vehicle was approved during 2015 budget negotiations. Cartwright's report last Monday night provided the results of quotes, with the suggestion to purchase a vehicle from Niagara Motors for \$28,000 to come from the department's reserve account.

There was some opposition to the price tag, but ultimately the recommendation was carried in a 5-2 vote.



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■ CITY CASHES IN

Port Colborne gets \$7.5M in sale of NRBN shares

FRANK IEMAN
Postmedia Network

The City of Port Colborne has banked \$7.5 million following the sale of city-owned Port Colborne Fibre Inc.'s 25 per cent share in Niagara Regional Broadband Network.

The announcement was made at last week's city council meeting where PC Fibre board chair Gary Bruno presented council with a giant cheque.

PC Fibre was created in 2002 to invest in the creation of a broadband company in the region.

About the same time, PC Hydro was sold/leased and was receiving monthly payments towards its purchase, Bruno said. A small portion of those dollars were used to fund PC Fibre.

Bruno said that bringing broadband to Niagara made sense in order to be able to offer high-speed Internet services to people who may not be in an area where big carriers offer it.

Municipalities came together to discuss starting a broadband business and funding the business venture.

"At that time it's when the rubber hits the road they're all looking to see if they have enough in their accounts. At the end only four were left standing," said Bruno of the early days.

With partners in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Niagara Falls and Grimsby investing alongside Port Colborne, NRBN was born.

The investment, Bruno — a former city councillor of 16 years — said, was not just good business, but good for the municipalities.

"It's not just about making money, there should be a greater need and that's where municipalities and businesses are different, and they should be different," Bruno said. "Because I think if you're fulfilling a municipal need and you can be profitable at the same time, those are the kinds of investments you should look at."



Gary Bruno.

FRANK IEMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Bruno said other municipalities should look to Port Colborne as an example of how they can act as businesses to make money that can then be leveraged for projects such as infrastructure.

An initial investment of \$375,000 was made by PC Fibre in 2002 and in 2008 a further cash infusion of \$400,000. The company

received \$825,000 in dividends while in partial ownership of NRBN, which combined with the sale price makes a return of \$8,325,000 on the initial \$775,000 investment.

Port Colborne chief administrative officer and PC Fibre general manager Scott Luey said the timing was right for the sale to be able to put these

funds away.

"We think that with all the infrastructure programs that are coming up it will give us an opportunity to almost triple our money," Luey said, referring to the possibility of provincial and federal infrastructure money which could be a split that would see the municipal, provincial and federal governments each pitch-

ing in one third of the cost.

"We could take our \$7.5 million and turn it into \$22.5 million," Luey said.

Luey said the decision to sell was partially about the security of having the money in hand.

"This was a private business that was in business to make money and with that comes risk," Luey said, adding as NRBN customers and supporters, the city hopes the company remains successful.

Luey, who joined the city just this past summer, said he was able to help the company reach a deal to sell to two of their already existing partners in the NRBN — Niagara Falls Hydro Holding Co. and Energy Services Niagara Inc.

"I think that really this was an example of an economic development initiative that went right," he said.

Bruno said that this is an example of Port Colborne being "the little city that can."

frank.ieman@summedia.ca
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LABOUR

First contract ratified by NPCA workers

Postmedia Network

Annual wage increases topping out at 2.25 per cent in the final leg of a four-year contract have been accepted by Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority employees.

Members of OPEIU Local 217 ratified their first collective agreement with NPCA. It was endorsed by 93 per cent of employees who voted.

Monetary improvements include annual wage increases of 1.5 per cent this year, followed in subsequent years by increases of 1.25 per cent, 1.75 per cent and 2.25 per cent.

Local 217 represents Niagara Parks Police and Niagara Parks employees.

Its new NPCA unit, formed in October 2014, represents 30 workers employed in a variety of positions. They include technicians, planners, conservation area field workers and administrative support staff.

"I'm delighted by the resounding

vote of confidence from this new local," OPEIU staff representative Paul Attard said in a union news release.

"It's always encouraging when newly organized workers arrive at a first collective agreement that meets their needs and expectations."

The contract also includes top-ups for pregnancy and parental leave, implementation of a health-care spending account, improvements to eyewear coverage, and standby and call-in language.

The deal also addresses a number of non-monetary items, such as job vacancies and transfers, layoff and recall language, and hours of work.

"It's seldom easy for workers to seek out representation by a union," OPEIU president Warren (Smokey) Thomas said. "These hardworking staff took all the appropriate steps and put their confidence in OPEIU."

The contract expires at the end of 2018.

CITY OF PORT COLBORNE
PUBLIC NOTICE - HOLIDAY HOURS

Committee of the Whole/Council Meeting Schedule:

One regular Committee of the Whole/Council meeting will be held on Monday, December 14, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, third floor, City Hall, 66 Charlotte Street, Port Colborne.

A special meeting of Council for the purpose of a capital project and infrastructure prioritization exercise will be held on Friday, December 11, 2015 at 8:45 a.m. in Committee Room 3, third floor, City Hall, 66 Charlotte Street, Port Colborne.

The regular meeting schedule will resume in January, with Committee of the Whole/Council meetings being held on the second and fourth Mondays of each month, starting at 6:30 p.m.

City Hall Holiday Closure:

City Hall will close for the holiday season on Thursday, December 24, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. and will reopen at 8:30 a.m. on Monday, January 4, 2016.

The City Works/Parks Yard will be closed on December 25 and 26, 2015 and January 1, 2016. Emergency calls during the closure can be made to 905-835-5079 (24 hour service).

Farmers' Market:

During the month of December, the Farmers' Market will be held from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on the following dates:

- Friday, December 4, 2015;
- Friday, December 11, 2015; and
- Friday, December 18, 2015.

During the holiday season, there will be no Farmers' Market on:

- December 25, 2015; and
- January 1, 2016.

Commencing January 8, 2016, the Farmers' Market will be held on that day and every Friday thereafter from 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Dated this 3rd day of December, 2015.

Ashley Grigg, City Clerk
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■ HOCKEY

Whalers hoping to extend three-game winning streak

Postmedia Network

Junior B graduates were major contributors as the Niagara Whalers came from behind to edge the Toronto Attack 6-5 to wrap up a winning weekend in the Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League's South Division.

Former St. Catharines forward Cam Blakely scored two goals and one-time Welland Junior Canadiens winger Brooker Muir added a single as the Port Colborne-based Whalers won their third in a row to improve to 14-9-0-1 in league play.

Sam Hodic, Alexandr Ivanov and Stanislav Pestikov rounded

out the scoring for Niagara which outshot the Attack 47-24 and won for the second time in as many nights.

Daniel Abbott, formerly with the Thorold Blackhawks; netted a hat trick and Mitch Reid, a Junior Canadians graduate; and Blakely each scored a goal Friday night at Vale Health and Wellness Centre where the Whalers defeated the North York Renegades 5-1.

Niagara outshot North York 47-24 with Jonathon D'Illario, a former Falcon and one-time Niagara IceDog, going the distance between the pipes for the Whalers to pick up the win.

Friday's schedule has Niagara

on the road for a 7:30 p.m. puck drop against the London Lakers. The Whalers play host to the Toronto Predators next Sunday, also getting underway at 7:30 p.m.

Niagara is 1-1 versus London in head-to-head so far this season. The Whalers lost 5-0 on their home ice Oct. 11 and skated to an 8-5 victory on Nov. 22, also at Vale Centre.

Niagara is leading the season series with the Predators two games to none. A 7-4 victory in Port Colborne on Oct. 25 was followed by a 7-3 win on Halloween night in Toronto.

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THE TRIBUNE


LOCAL NEWS

■ HOUSE TOUR: Homeowners open their doors to community

It's beginning to feel like Christmas

ALLAN BENNER
Postmedia Network

It was a bit nerve-wracking for Jake Adair.

After 11 years of work building log cabin-styled home by hand on Barrick Road, he welcomed hundreds of people through his doors Saturday for the first time.

And considering the amount of work he put into the construction of the building — the landscaping of the four acres of property that now resembles a golf course, and the meticulous details added to the design, such as decorative buttons imported from Italy — he was a little worried about how his labour of love would be perceived.

"This is my house. Do I want any negative reactions? That's scary to me because of all the hours I put into it," he said while dozens of people wandered through the building.

The home Adair shares with his wife Heather Menesley was one of five Port Colborne and area properties that were put on display for the community during the eighth annual Port Colborne Winter Celebration Holiday House Tour, a fundraising event held to benefit youth and family outreach programs at the Hub, a cafe in the Guild Hall.

While Menesley agreed with the nerve-wracking part, she

said it was also a lot of fun.

"Today when I woke up, it felt like Christmas," she said. Their home certainly looked the part, decorated for the season with the help of Menesley's friends who own Oliver and Rust vintage interiors.

Being part of the tour added an incentive to get some of the finishing touches done, Adair said.

"I would suggest to anyone who has a husband who can't finish that last piece of trim, do a tour," he said with a laugh. "It made me do it."

Donna Abbott, who organized this year's tour, welcomed visitors to her Ridgewood Avenue home for the first time. The parishioner at St. James and St. Brendan Anglican Church said she agreed to organize the house tour this year when Rev. Rob Harkmans asked her if she would help.

Although her house was already decorated for the holiday, Abbott said she had no intention of adding it to the tour because she was expecting a houseful of guests Sunday, and had a great deal of cooking to do beforehand.

But when she was short one house for this year's tour, she decided to add her home to the list.

When people started arriving, Abbott enjoyed the company.

"I decorate every year. I love

Christmas. I would start in June," she said. "To me, it was no big deal at all."

Many of Abbott's holiday decorations are cherished reminders of past Christmases.

"Every place I've ever visited, I picked up a Christmas ornament or little toys. It's just little memories, basically, is what you're putting together," she said. "It's really nice to hear what people have to say."

Volunteer Linda Lamarche saw more than 200 people were expected to participate in the tour this year, visiting homes of people who are "keen on giving back to the community."

While all the homes on the tour were beautiful and well-decorated, Harkmans said they aren't necessarily historic mansions.

"It's important on the tour to have houses that aren't historic million-dollar homes, but just people who have done with their decorating," he said.

Other stops on the tour included Pat and Cecil Wescome's home at 11615 Burnaby Rd., Wainfleet, the home of Judy and Wayne Marr at 10155 Cement Rd., and Karen Sherk's home at 99 Lakeshore St.

allan.benner@sunmedia.ca
Twitter: @abenner1

■ CHARITY

City donates vacant lot to Habitat for Humanity

FRANKI KEMAN
Postmedia Network

Port Colborne city council voted last Monday to donate a vacant lot to Habitat for Humanity for a future build.

The property — 254 Mitchell St. — was vested with the city in 2005 and the former building was demolished due to its condition.

Council moved unanimously to "sell" the vacant lot to Habitat for the price of a louche.

"It was a very strategic and a very encouraging decision to get a project going," said Habitat chief executive officer Alastair Davis. "Having this lot means knowing we have a property to build on in the future."

The build, he said, would likely occur in 2017.

Meanwhile, the organization remains busy in Port Colborne with their renovation build at 320 Bell St.

The 80-year-old donated home is expected to be ready for a spring move-in date. The organization is still accepting applications for families in need of a helping hand.

In the meantime, the inside is being gutted and will have new electrical work, plumbing and heating to bring the home up to 2016 standards.

Davis said finding tradespeople and businesses that are willing to step up to the plate



FRANKI KEMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

ServiceMaster Restore Niagara workers gut the home at 329 Bell Street, a Habitat for Humanity renovation build.

and donate their work to Habitat is the crucial next step.

"We need help with trades like plumber, heat installation, roofers, siding, kitchen installer," Davis said.

He added that volunteers outside the trades are always encouraged to donate their time to help with simpler tasks. Businesses and community groups can also sign up to "adopt a day" to work in the home as a team in February and March.

"We will strongly use volunteers to do things like painting and reinstalling the trim and just doing a whole variety of things," he said.

Davis said the organization is grateful to ServiceMaster Restore Niagara, who have been hard at work in the home. He said Habitat also has a company that has

stepped up to do the electrical work.

Chris Osborne, a licensed carpenter with ServiceMaster and the supervisor for the team at Habitat — who sits on the Habitat for Humanity Niagara board of directors — said that the work needed was a good fit for his crew.

"I think it's a great cause — give back a little bit to the community and help everybody out and especially families that need a helping hand," Osborne said.

He said he would encourage other companies and tradespeople to step up and do the same.

The deadline to apply for the renovated home on Bell Street is Dec. 15. Families are asked to contact Sandy Rempel at Habitat for Humanity at 905-685-7395, ext. 403.

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Juno winner Johnny Reid coming to Meridian Centre

Juno Award-winning singer Johnny Reid is on the bill at the Meridian Centre in St. Catharines

for Tuesday, March 15. The Garden City is included in his "What Love is All About" national tour that kicks off Feb. 1. Reid is joined with recording artist Aaron Goodwin and rock and roll, country soul-singer JJ Shiplett — along with an appearance by Cape Breton fiddler and international performer Natalie MacMaster. Johnny Reid's Tartan Army Fan Club had first access to pre-sale

tickets beginning Tuesday via www.johnnyreid.com. Tickets for all shows go on sale to the public Friday and cost \$41.75 to \$76.75 (plus applicable services charges). They are available at www.ticketmaster.ca or through charge-by-phone at 1-855-985-5000. Reid is also partnering with Plus One on the tour, donating \$1 from each ticket purchased, in participating areas, in support of



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■ MUSIC

Jazz singer Barlow to woo Welland audience

Postmedia Network

Junco Award-winning jazz singer Emilie-Claire Barlow has a date with Welland-Port Colborne Concert Association.

Barlow will be performing material from her new album, *On A Clear Day*, when she visits Welland Centennial Secondary School on Saturday, Dec. 12.

Barlow won a Junco for best jazz album in 2014, for *Seule ce Soir*.

The Toronto native will be accompanied by some of Canada's top jazz musicians when she performs songs from her other albums, including *The Beat Goes On*, inspired by popular music of the '60s.

While the concert series once had a waiting list for tickets as long as 700 names, association publicity chair Cheryl Maurice says that list has all but "evaporated."

That means although the

2015-16 series is sold out, there will likely be tickets available for this show, and others, freed up by people unable to attend.

Tickets are generally about \$26 apiece. For ticket availability, call Hilda Belcastro at 905-788-1648.

Barlow's show in Centennial's Dr. J.M. Ennis Auditorium starts 7:30 p.m.

For other upcoming performances in the new year, visit www.wellandportcolborneconcert.org.



Jazz singer Emilie-Claire Barlow performs in Welland on Dec. 12.

BARLOW/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

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LOCAL NEWS

■ MUSIC

Fiddle is family for MacMaster and Leahy

JOHN LAW

Postmedia Network

Fiddle great Natalie MacMaster is about to spill the beans about Saturday's Christmas show in St. Catharines when she catches herself and muffles the phone.

"For the Christmas show, I give away any of that?" she asks Donnell Leahy, her on-stage partner and husband of 12 years. He doesn't take long to answer: No.

"We don't want to give too much away," she says, back on the line. "It's a special Christmas show for us just because we're trying a new concept that we're thrilled about."

Further prodding goes nowhere. Like a mysterious package under the tree, MacMaster says you'll just have to wait.

"I know, ain't that awful? You'll have to come see. Part of the surprise is seeing the visual... It's just a new concept for Donnell and I for a show. Very fresh, hot off the press."

That's always been MacMaster's way. For music so steeped in history, she has never shied away from fiddling with expectations. Whether it's injecting blues,

WHO: Natalie MacMaster & Donnell Leahy

WHERE: FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines

WHEN: Saturday, 7:30 p.m.

TICKETS: \$55 regular, \$46.75 PAC members; www.firstontariopac.ca

rock or jazz into the mix, her albums and concerts are rarely by-the-book affairs. She and Leahy are constantly finding ways to make it more than just a fiddle show.

"As Donnell always says, there's certain expectations that people have and we'll always do those," she says.

"We'll always give people the parts of us that they expect, we're just putting it in a little different form."

Fans have been expecting a proper collaboration between MacMaster and husband Leahy, who hails from the famed family of Ontario fiddlers, since they got married. They kept waiting until this year's release of mix of original and traditional music that's unlike anything either has made.



HANDOUT / POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Husband and wife Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy pack their fiddles for the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre Dec. 5.

"We made many attempts previously to do (an album), and something always took us away from it," she says. "So we just really committed to it and said, 'Gosh, we have to do it this time.'"

"It was kind of hard to get all the people we wanted. It was more than kind of hard, it

was next to impossible. But it all worked out in the end."

The long wait produced one huge pay-off: Producer Bob Ezrin. It was only through a series of delays — children, solo tours, Leahy tearing his Achilles tendon — that they crossed paths with the renowned Canadian rock

producer, who has guided classic albums by KISS, Alice Cooper and Pink Floyd. He asked MacMaster to play fiddle on a Christmas song he was producing for Johnny Reid. It led to Ezrin calling her later offering to help on MacMaster and Leahy's long-gestating album.

Most of the record was finished by the time Ezrin went to work, but his contributions were "the polish," says MacMaster.

"He's very inspiring, very creative," she says. "Generally, he just made everything a little slicker. He's just so natural and honest how he hears the music."

"The process proved to MacMaster there's always another door to open in a career that's already made her a member of the Order of Canada.

"Every time we play it's new," she says. "Every time there's something else to learn, every time you grow a little more. Every time we evolve a little more."

"It's a creative channel that never closes, and only blossoms the more you enter into it."

As for working with Leahy, MacMaster doesn't get too "analytical" about it. It's a marriage that works on every level, including creatively.

"There's a back and forth there, there's respect," she says. "I look forward to running all my ideas past him, and him for me."

john.law@sunmedia.ca

■ THEATRE

Mary Poppins swoops into convention centre

JOHN LAW

Postmedia Network

The world's most famous nanny is heading to Scotiabank Convention Centre.

For its annual December musical, Linus Hand Productions is busting out the flying umbrellas for *Mary Poppins*, which producer Hand calls his biggest production since *Beauty and the Beast* eight years ago. With its mix of professional actors and students from Hand's Niagara Falls drama academy, there will be upwards of 60 people on stage.

It's also the most expensive show he has ever secured the rights to. The stage ver-

sion to the Disney classic was acquired by legendary producer Cameron McIntosh (*Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Misérables*) in 1993, and its brand name doesn't come cheap.

"(But) it's a monster," says Hand. "What I mean by that is, it reaches all age groups."

The show uses elements from both the 1964 Disney film and the P.L. Travers books it was based on, and while some things have been removed, there's one aspect you can still bank on: Mary will fly. So will Bert. It's adding to the workload of an already

WHAT: Mary Poppins

WHERE: Scotiabank Convention Centre, 6815 Stanley Ave., Niagara Falls

WHEN: Dec. 4 to 12
TICKETS: Start at \$25 for locals, 905-357-7008 or BoxOffice@fallsconventions.com

massive show for director Roxanne Rees.

"That requires more attention," she says. "For safety, and making sure the choreography works with the music. There's also all of the magic tricks — you need that illusion. Mary's got magic, and I've got non-magicians trying to figure out

what the tricks are."

The show stars Karin Johnson as Mary and Gavin Bowerman as Bert, along with Kendra Williams (Mrs. Banks) and Preston Vendramin (Mr. Banks). It's at the convention centre for six shows starting Dec. 4.

"Everybody's waiting for Julie Andrews," says Rees. "Everybody has grown up with those wonderful songs — *A Spoonful of Sugar*, *Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious* — so it's very important to find the right person, that has that charismatic attitude, the gestures, the posture, that the audience can attach to."

Rees has previously directed *Into the Woods* and *Hairspray*



JEFFREY REES/PHOTO

Karin Johnson stars as Mary Poppins in a new production of the classic opening at Scotiabank Convention Centre Dec. 4.

for Linus Hand Productions, and was technical director for last December's production of

The Wizard of Oz.

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Personal Notices

Available Bachelorette

Rebecca is a beautiful, successful 44-year-old woman looking for love. She is a Marketing Manager, owns her own home, and is debt free. Rebecca is a divorced mother of one, her daughter, age 20, has recently moved out, leaving Rebecca with an empty nest. She has been divorced for about 5 years, and has been very focused on being a great, attentive mother and having a successful career. Balancing her job as a single mother, and her career, left

even less for dating. With her daughters recent move, she has been given much more free time to enjoy herself and her life, and time to focus on finding a successful relationship. Rebecca enjoys going out for dinner, a day at the spa, yoga, traveling, boating, candle-lit dinners and great conversations. She has a great, fulfilling and joyous life, and while she does not feel as though she needs someone else to complete it, she wants someone to enjoy that with.

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WITH A DRAFT PLAN OF CONDOMINIUM UNDER THE PLANNING ACT**

Thursday - December 10, 2015

Firefighters Memorial Community Hall, 31907 Park Street, Wainfleet, Ontario, L0S 1V0

Lakeshore Beach Properties Limited (Lakeshore) is proposing a low density residential development at 11705 Lakeshore Road to the Township of Wainfleet, Regional Municipality of Niagara. The lands subject to the Class Environmental Assessment are shown on the map below. The subject lands are 14.3 hectares (35.3 acres) and are located on the south side of Lakeshore Road between Sideroad 18 and Bellevue Beach Road, bordering the Lake Erie shoreline. The Geesay Municipal Drain is situated along the west limit of the property. The proposed Draft Plan of Condominium currently includes 78 hectares (19.2 acres) within this area.

3 to 5 p.m. - Open House

7 to 9 p.m. • Presentation and Discussion

The proponent (Lakewood) is seeking approval of a Draft Plan of Condominium under section 51 of the Planning Act, for 41 single-detached residential units together with common element areas required for private internal roads, site servicing infrastructure, walkway linkages and designated Fowler's Toad Habitat.

A Complete Application or Draft Plan of Condominium approval and Zoning Bylaw Amendment was received by the Township of Wainfleet in November 2014. The Township of Wainfleet Official Plan approved by the Ontario Municipal Board on August 14, 2014, recognizes the proposed Lakewood Beach Development, establishes the required land use designations and provides the policy basis for this project.

Concurrent with the Draft Plan of Condominium application, Notices were provided to the Township of Wainfleet and the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) that Water and Wastewater Servicing for the Lakewood Beach Development is being planned as a Schedule C project. The project is subject to the requirements of the Environmental Assessment (EA) process. Once approved under the Ontario Environmental Assessment (EA), through Integration with Draft Plan of Condominium approval under the Planning Act, Public Information Centre # 2 (PIC # 2) is the second of 3 mandatory points of public contact under the Integrated Municipal EA process. It will also serve as an Information Meeting required under the Planning Act. PIC # 2 will provide information on:

- The Proposed Draft Plan of Vacant Land Condominium
- Review of Alternative Solutions for Water and Wastewater Servicing considered in Phase 2 of the Municipal Class EA process
- Public input received in PIC # 1 which informs the Municipal Class EA process and the Draft Plan of Condominium
- Alternative Design Concepts for Water and Wastewater Servicing under evaluation in Phase 3 of the Municipal Class EA process

The purpose of PIC # 2 is for the public and any interested stakeholders to receive information and provide feedback on the proposed Draft Plan of Condominium and related Water and Wastewater Servicing Alternative Design Concepts under evaluation following the Integrated Municipal Class EA process. Public consultation and input is an integral part of both the Municipal Class EA and Planning Act processes, as the proponent works toward establishing sustainable Water and Wastewater Servicing for the Lakewood Beach Project.

Notice issued on December 3, 2015.

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